

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A plasma processing apparatus comprising:

a plasma processing chamber;

a susceptor installed within the plasma processing chamber, the susceptor being made of ~~[[a]]~~ an electrically conductive material;

an electrostatic chuck formed on the susceptor for mounting thereon a substrate to be processed;

a ring member directly disposed on the susceptor wherein an innermost circumference of the ring member surrounds ~~to surround~~ a periphery of the substrate to be processed with a gap ~~therebetween~~ between the innermost circumference of the ring member and the periphery of the substrate to be processed when the substrate to be processed is mounted on the electrostatic chuck; and

a lower ring body placed directly below the substrate to be processed and the ring member,

wherein when the substrate to be processed is mounted on the electrostatic chuck, a ~~whole upper surface of the lower ring body is placed below the periphery of the substrate to be processed and an inner circumference of the ring member~~ a part of an upper surface of the lower ring body is placed directly below the gap between the innermost circumference of the ring member and the periphery of the substrate to be processed.

Claim 2 (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein a ratio of an impedance per unit area of the ring member to that of the substrate to be processed is equal to or less than about 5.

Claim 3 (Original): The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the ratio of the impedance per unit area of the ring member to that of the substrate to be processed is equal to or less than about 3.

Claim 4 (Original): The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the ratio of the impedance per unit area of the ring member to that of the substrate to be processed is equal to or less than about 1.5.

Claim 5 (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the ring member is made of a material having an impedance substantially identical to that of the substrate to be processed and a thickness of the ring member is equal to or less than about five times a thickness of the substrate to be processed.

Claim 6 (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the ring member is made of the same material as that forming the substrate to be processed and a thickness of the ring member is equal to or less than about five times a thickness of the substrate to be processed.

Claim 7 (Original): The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the substrate to be processed is a semiconductor wafer made of silicon and having a thickness of about 0.8 mm and the ring member is made of silicon and has a thickness not greater than about 4 mm.

Claim 8 (Original): The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the substrate to be processed is a semiconductor wafer made of silicon and the ring member is made of silicon and has a thickness substantially identical to that of the semiconductor wafer.

Claim 9 (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the ring member is formed of SiC, aluminum having a thermally sprayed coating formed on a surface thereof, quartz or ceramics.

Claim 10 (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the susceptor includes a conductive lower electrode and the ring member is formed on a surface of the lower electrode by thermal spraying.

Claim 11 (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the lower ring body serves to protect the susceptor from a plasma generated within the plasma processing chamber.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): A plasma processing apparatus comprising:
a plasma processing chamber;
a susceptor installed within the plasma processing chamber;
an electrostatic chuck formed on the susceptor for mounting thereon a substrate to be processed; and
a ring member disposed to surround a periphery of the substrate to be processed with a gap therebetween,

wherein ~~the electrostatic chuck is located directly below the substrate to be processed and the ring member~~ the whole ring member is located directly on the electrostatic chuck and a lower surface of the ring member is higher than an upper surface of the electrostatic chuck.

Claim 13 (Canceled).

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): A focus ring disposed on a susceptor to surround a periphery of a substrate to be processed, the susceptor being installed within a plasma processing chamber of a plasma processing apparatus and being made of ~~[[a]]~~ an electrically conductive material, the focus ring comprising:

a ring member directly disposed on the susceptor wherein an innermost circumference of the ring member surrounds ~~to surround~~ the periphery of the substrate to be processed with a gap ~~therebetween~~ between the innermost circumference of the ring member and the periphery of the substrate to be processed when the substrate to be processed is mounted on an electrostatic chuck; and

a lower ring body placed directly below the substrate to be processed and the ring member,

wherein when the substrate to be processed is mounted on an electrostatic chuck, a ~~whole upper surface of the lower ring body is placed below the periphery of the substrate to be processed and an inner circumference of the ring member~~ a part of an upper surface of the lower ring body is placed directly below the gap between the innermost circumference of the ring member and the periphery of the substrate to be processed.

Claim 15 (Original): The focus ring of claim 14, wherein a ratio of an impedance per unit area of the ring member to that of the substrate to be processed is equal to or less than about 5.

Claim 16 (Original): The focus ring of claim 14, wherein the ring member is made of a material having an impedance substantially identical to that of the substrate to be processed and a thickness of the ring member is equal to or less than about five times a thickness of the substrate to be processed.

Claim 17 (Original): The focus ring of claim 14, wherein the ring member is made of the same material as that forming the substrate to be processed and a thickness of the ring member is equal to or less than about five times a thickness of the substrate to be processed.

Claim 18 (Original): The focus ring of claim 14, wherein the ring member is formed of SiC, aluminum having a thermally sprayed coating formed on a surface thereof, quartz, or ceramics.

Claim 19 (Original): The focus ring of claim 14, wherein the ring member is formed at a surface of a conductive lower electrode by thermal spraying.

Claim 20 (Canceled).

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the entire upper surface of the susceptor is covered by the electrostatic chuck.

Claim 22 (New): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the whole lower ring is inserted into a groove formed on the susceptor.

Claim 23 (New): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein a thickness of the ring member is substantially equal to that of the substrate to be processed, and a height of an upper surface of the ring member is substantially equal to a height of an upper surface of the substrate to be processed.

Claim 24 (New): The focus ring of claim 14, wherein the whole lower ring is inserted into a groove formed on the susceptor.

Claim 25 (New): The focus ring of claim 14, wherein a thickness of the ring member is substantially equal to that of the substrate to be processed, and a height of an upper surface of the ring member is substantially equal to a height of an upper surface of the substrate to be processed.

Claim 26 (New): The apparatus of claim 12, wherein a height of a lower surface of the ring member is substantially equal to a height of a lower surface of the substrate to be processed.

Claim 27 (New): The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the entire ring member is placed on the electrostatic chuck.